South Union Messenger (September 1972)

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The Dream That Came True

During the past eleven years while the Auburn Shaker Museum was housed in the small church building in Auburn, supporters of the project dreamed of the time when the museum might be moved into an original South Union Shaker building.

Also, over the last ten years, the members of the Shaker Festival committee have dreamed of a time when "Shakertown Revisited" might have a permanent location.

The dream came true at the November 28, 1971, dedication program when the South Union organization received the deed for the Centre House, the Preservatory, and 3 1/2 acres of land. Thanks are due Governor Louie Nunn and the founders and sponsors who pooled resources and turned the dream into a reality.

In December, the South Union project was honored by being awarded the 1971 Russellville Rockwell Recognition Award for an "outstanding contribution to the welfare and betterment of the community."

January brought another special honor when President J. Granville Clark was cited as "Logan's man of the year" by the Russellville News-Democrat. The award which recognizes community leadership was given in large part because of Mr. Clark's leadership in helping to acquire the Shaker property.

Membership

There are now 185 charter memberships in Shakertown at South Union. Of these, 121 are active; 31 associate; 9 contributing; 14 sustaining; and 10 life. Since a membership can be held jointly by a husband and wife, the actual number of members is 276.

The 1972 membership dues made it possible to buy the property and to begin the restoration work in the Centre House.

When the three to four coats of paint were removed from the chair and peg rails and from the window facings, an original mustard stain was revealed. The base boards and some doors proved to be the usual brick red. The plastered walls have been returned to a flat white to simulate the original plaster. The restoration work has been done on part of the first and ground floors only.
The strength of any organization is equal only to the total strength of its members. Shakertown at South Union is fortunate in its membership.

Will you help double the membership for 1973? To move forward, the project needs the moral and monetary support of a growing membership.

Note: When you visit the Museum, will you please show your personal membership card to the hostess at the registration desk so the admission will be waived. Our hostesses do not know all of you who are members.

THE MUSEUM

In April the museum was moved from its former site in Auburn to its new location in the South Union Centre House. Displays have been arranged throughout eleven rooms and three halls.

The museum opened officially May 15. Through August 31, 5,873 visitors had registered. These represented 42 states and 7 foreign countries.

Although not furnished at this time, the third floor and the kitchen and bake room areas are open for visitors to observe the construction. Begun in 1822 and finished in 1833, the South Union Centre House stands today as a classic example of the Shaker ability to build that which would last.

The Museum will close October 1 and reopen by May 1.

THE FESTIVAL: "SHAKERTOWN REVISITED"

The eleventh Auburn and South Union Festival was extended to two weeks this year, running from July 11-23. Attendance totals were as follows:

Museum . . . 2,471
Pageant: . . . 1,650
Meals . . . 2,500

The Logan County Art Guild exhibit located in the Preservatory resulted in good sales for the guild members.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Williams of Bowling Green catered the meals. The food, which was served from an attractive buffet, was all prepared from authentic Shaker recipes.

A special festival feature was the excellent photographic exhibit Life Style by Design, assembled by Susan Jackson Keig of Chicago. The exhibit, hung in the meeting room, remained through August.
MEETING STANDARDS

Three steps toward becoming an accredited American museum have been taken.

First, an application was filed with the Internal Revenue Service to obtain official recognition of the non-profit status of the Shaker-town at South Union project. Such recognition has been granted and a number has been assigned to the organization for tax purposes.

Second, a systematic accession program is underway. Each museum item is being numbered, photographed, and described on approved museum accession cards.

Third, a board of trustees has been elected to meet annually with the local committee. The first meeting of trustees and committee members was held July 12. A special guest at the meeting was Mr. John Ott, Director of the Shaker restoration at Hancock, Massachusetts.

The trustees, all of whom have had extensive business and professional experience, will counsel with the local organization and help to plan all future developments. Those who have accepted the position of trustees are as follows:

Dr. Raymond Cravens
Mr. Edward Freeman
Dr. Robert McDowell
Mrs. Lawrence Miller
Dr. Lynn Montell
Father Thomas O’Conner
Mr. Russell Procter
Mr. James C. Thomas

Vice President of Academic Affairs
Western Kentucky University

Vice President Chase Manhattan Bank
New York

Editor of the Filson Club Quarterly
Louisville, Kentucky

President of the Hancock Shaker Restoration
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Coordinator of Center for Inter-cultural Studies
Western Kentucky University

O.S.B. St. Mark’s Monastery

Owner of Prairie View Farms and retired president of Belknap Hardware
Louisville, Kentucky

Vice President and Curator
Shakertown at Pleasant Hill
Harrodsburg, Kentucky

HONORARY Trustees:

Eldress Bertha Lindsey
Eldress Gertrude Soule
Mrs. Janice Holt Giles

Canterbury Shakers
Canterbury, New Hampshire
Sabbathday Lake Shakers
Poland Springs, Maine
Author of “The Believers” and other historical novels
Spout Springs - Knifely, Kentucky
THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Beginning in March with the restoration project, volunteers have played a vital part in the entire Shakertown at South Union program. Groups, as well as individuals, have helped in various ways such as stripping paint, replacing pegs, moving and arranging the museum, making window curtains, cleaning windows and furniture, and working on the grounds.

A special note of thanks should go to those who have served as museum hostesses throughout the season and to those who manned the ticket desks during the festival.

Also, red feathers should be placed in the hats of the eight farm agents who combined "know how" and hard work to clean and oil the farm tools and implements which are now on display.

Participating in the worthy project were the following:

Harlon Crenshaw, Metcalfe County
Henry Duncan, Butler County
Douglas Henshaw, Warren County
John Jordan, Monroe County
Earl Kilbourne, Barren County
Clifton Taylor, Simpson County
Harold Vaught, Warren County
Aubrey Warren, Logan County

Gifts of Shaker Items to the Museum

Since the museum opened in May, friends of Shakertown at South Union have presented a number of valuable Shaker items.

Three fine straight chairs have been given --- one by Mrs. Calvin Colburn, Russellville, and two by Mrs. Mary Coke Bush of Bowling Green. All three chairs were bought at the 1922 Shakertown sale.

The Reverend and Mrs. Peter Smyrl, of Cumberland, Maryland, presented a lovely New England Shaker rocker. The Smyrals had visited the museum in 1971. This summer they returned, bringing the rocker from their private collection. The Smyrals'
interest in Shakerism stems from his studies at the Princeton Presbyterian Seminary.

Another much appreciated gift was a South Union bench donated by Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kimball, Russellville. The bench stretchers are the same pattern as the spindles in the Wash House stairway.

A much prized gift was the 1814 dated brick given by the Reverend J. W. Robinson, Louisville. Reverend Robinson found the brick in 1926 while working at South Union. No dated bricks have been found either at the Pleasant Hill or Hancock Shaker restorations, so the use of a dated brick to mark the earliest houses seems to have been peculiar to South Union. A South Union brick dated 1816 is in the Shaker collection in Western's Kentucky Museum.

Mrs. Stewart Williams, Springfield, Tennessee, has presented an English china plate, which was given to her by Mrs. Frances Carey, a South Union elderess. In the late years of the South Union Society, the members often favored their friends from "the world" with one of their personal possessions.

Brother Thomas Whitaker, O.S.B., St. Mark's Monastery, has given an original South Union seed package, a valuable addition.

The museum's collection of original South Union stoves has been increased through gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hall Robbins, Auburn, and Mrs. Ula Lockhart and Miss Bessie Lockhart, Rockfield.

Donations to the South Union Project

A big vote of thanks is hereby tendered Russell Porter, Louisville, and Mr. Buck Anderson, manager of the Western Kentucky Gas Company in Russellville for their part in getting a gas range installed in the kitchen area. Every two years the stove will be replaced with a new model. A dozen loud hurrahs for Western Kentucky Gas Company.

Other gifts have been photographic prints from Mr. Billy Davis, Louisville Courier-Journal; stove and refrigerator for the Preservation, committee members Prather Price and Russell Porter; opaque shades for museum windows, Julia Neal, Bowling Green; the price of a bucket of paint, Thomas Askew, Louisville member; and a step ladder by Grover Corum, Auburn.
Needs

You may not have a South Union chair or a stove to donate, but perhaps you can help in supplying some of our everyday needs. Or you may know of some individual or group who would like to donate one of the following:

- A rotating floor fan for the museum office and one for the gift shop
- A large window fan to be installed on the third floor to help in air circulation.
- A 12 ft. aluminum ladder.
- Long folding tables to be used when serving special meals.
- A two-drawer (or larger) metal filing cabinet.
- A selectric IBM electric typewriter.
- A hard-duty electric floor buffer.
- A riding lawn mower.
- Stack chairs (150-200) to be used in the meeting room for community meetings.

Kodak Pictures

Pictures made at South Union by high school groups, picnickers, or Sunday visitors are needed. Such pictures often contain closeups of the fences, cisterns, doorways, foot scrapers, etc. Detailed evidence of South Union before 1922 has been found in pictures which have already been copied through the courtesy of Mrs. Stewart Williams, Springfield, Tennessee; Mrs. Reid Tackett and Kenneth Tackett, Bowling Green; Johnny Hyde, South Union; and Julia Neal, Bowling Green.

Anyone sending in a picture of the North House will receive the loudest cheers of all because so far no picture of that family house has appeared.

Window Project

Some of the original small-paned Centre House windows have been saved. It is hoped that it will soon be possible to begin re-installing these original windows. Would you like to join Mrs. Myrtle Calvert, Centertown; Russell Procter, Louisville; Monroe Porter, Florida; and others in this worthwhile project?
STAMP BOOKS

The Auburn Homemakers are collecting green and top-value stamp books to be used in furnishing the Centre House kitchen. If you have stamps or books you would like to give, please mail to Mrs. David Hall, Auburn, Kentucky, 42206.

NEWCOMERS TO THE SOUTH UNION COMMUNITY

Mr. Lee Thomas, of Thomas Industries of Kentucky, has purchased the Shaker farm formerly owned by Mr. Oscar Bond.

It is good to see that purebred cattle are again grazing on the Shaker farmland. It is also good to learn that Mr. Thomas prizes his 1846 Ministry's House and expects to restore it.

The 1869 Shaker Hotel has recently been purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Wm. N. Trougott of Bowling Green. Mrs. Trougott was formerly from the Prospect Hill community and as a child visited at the hotel.

Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Reeves, former owners of the Hotel, continue to run the store located in a 1917 Shaker building. The building also houses the South Union post office established in 1826.

Our close neighbors, the Benedictines, are not newcomers, but their organization does have the new name of St. Mark's.

LOGAN COUNTY CO-OP MEETING

This year's annual Logan County Telephone Co-op meeting was held on the South Union Shakeretown grounds. More than 300 of those attending the meeting accepted the invitation to visit the Shaker Museum as guests of the company.
SHAKERTOWN

At South Union, Kentucky 42283